

## Message Text

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65

ACTION AF-06

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-02

INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15

USIA-06 ACDA-05 AID-05 IO-11 SAJ-01 SAM-01 EB-07

TRSE-00 OMB-01 OFA-01 /097 W  
----- 033133

R 161600Z MAR 76

FM AMEMBASSY COTONOU

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 8287

INFO AMEMBASSY ABIDJAN

AMEMBASSY LAGOS

AMEMBASSY LOME

AMEMBASSY MOSCOW

AMEMBASSY PARIS

C O N F I D E N T I A L COTONOU 0487

EO 1165 : GDS

TAGS: EAID, PFOR, DM, UR

SUBJ: SOVIET AID TO BENIN ON THE RISE?

REF (A) COTONOU 212, (B) 75-COTONOU A-85, (C) COTONOU 71,  
(D) 75-COTONOU 456

1. SOVIET AID TO BENIN HAS UP TO NOW BEEN INFINITESIMAL. EVEN BENINESE CIVIL SERVANTS ARE DERISIVE WHEN DISCUSSING IT PRIVATELY. IN THE PAST SOVIET DIPLOMATIS HAVE EXCUSED IT BY A LACK OF PARTICULAR INTEREST IN BENIN IN RELATION TO SOVIET COMMITMENTS ELSEWHERE. THE EMBASSY BELIEVES THE SITUATION IS ABOUT TO CHANGE. THIS SEEMS THE NATURAL REWARD FOR BENIN'S UNSWERVING SUPPORT OF THE SOVIETS IN ANGOLA AND ITS FACILIT-ATINT TRANSIT OF ANGOLA-BOUND EQUIPMENT.

2. AS NOTED IN REF A, 20 BENINESE ARMY AND POLICE OFFICERS AND NCO'S HAVE GONE OFF THIS MONTH TO MOSCOW FOR IDEOLOGICAL TRAINING. RECENTLY THE BENINESE GOVT HAS RENEWED ITS REQUEST  
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FOR THE SOVIETS TO PROVIDE A BUS SYSTEM FOR COTONOU. THIS WAS

PART OF THE AID PACKAGE DISCUSSED BY FONMIN ALLADAYE DURING HIS VISIT TO MOSCOW IN APRIL 75 (REF D). THE EMBASSY HAS HEARD OF A CIRCULAR WHICH RECENTLY WENT OUT FROM THE MIN OF EDUCATION ASKING SCHOOL DIRECTORS TO FURNISH THEIR ESTIMATES OF TEACHER NEEDS OVER THE NEXT FIVE YEARS IN ORDER TO ALLOW THE SOVIET EMBASSY TO DRAW UP A PROGRAM FOR SUPPLYING TEACHERS TO BENIN.

3. PERHAPS MORE IMPORTANTLY, WE HAVE NOTICED A SWITCH IN THE LINE BEING TAKEN BY SOVIETS DIPLOMATS, PARTICULARLY AMB IVAN IL'IN IN DISCUSSING AID. NOT TOO MANY MONTHS AGO THEY WERE SAYING TO US THAT AID WAS IMPOSSIBLE BECAUSE THE BENINESE COULD NOT COME UP WITH CONCRETE PROPOSALS. NOW THE SOVIET AMB SAYS SEVERAL PROJECTS ARE UNDER STUDY. IN DEC IL'IN TOLD OUR AMB THAT THE SOVIET-BENINESE FISHERIES PROJECT NEGOTIATIONS LAST AUG HAD FAILED (75 COTONOU A-71). NOW THE LINE IS THAT AFTER EIGHT MONTHS, THEY STILL HAVE NOT WORKED OUT AN AGREEMENT. IN DEC HE TERMED THE RESULTS OF THE SOVIET GEOLOGICAL STUDY NOT SUCCESSFUL (SUBSEQUENTLY WE HEARD FROM A CONFIDENTIAL SOURCE THAT THE TEAM MAY HAVE DISCOVERED GOLD WHICH HAS AROUSED SOVIET INTERESTS). LAST WEEK THE AMB SAID THAT THE RESULTS OF THE SURVEY WERE BEING STUDIED AND IF ANYTHING POSITIVE WERE FOUND, THE USSR WOULD BE WILLING TO ASSIST BENIN IN EXPLOITING THEIR MINERALS.

4. ALL OF THESE BITS AND PIECES, AND CHANGES IN SIGNALS, LEAD US TO CONCLUDE THAT WE MAY BE ON THE THRESHOLD OF A SIGNIFICANT (IN RELATIVE TERMS) INCREASE IN SOVIET AID AND PRESENCE IN BENIN.  
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